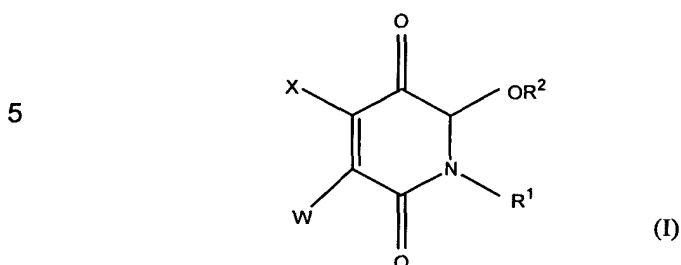


CLAIMS

1. A compound of the general formula



in which

10  $R^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, aralkyl, heterocyclyl or heterocyclalkyl group;

$R^2$  represents a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, heterocyclyl or heterocyclalkyl group; and

W and X each independently represents a hydrogen or halogen atom.

- 15 2. A compound according to claim 1 in which  $R^1$  represents a  $C_{1-12}$  alkyl or  $C_{6-14}$  aryl group, each group being optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen atoms, nitro, cyano, hydroxyl,  $C_{1-4}$  alkyl,  $C_{1-4}$  haloalkyl,  $C_{1-4}$  alkoxy and  $C_{1-4}$  haloalkoxy groups.

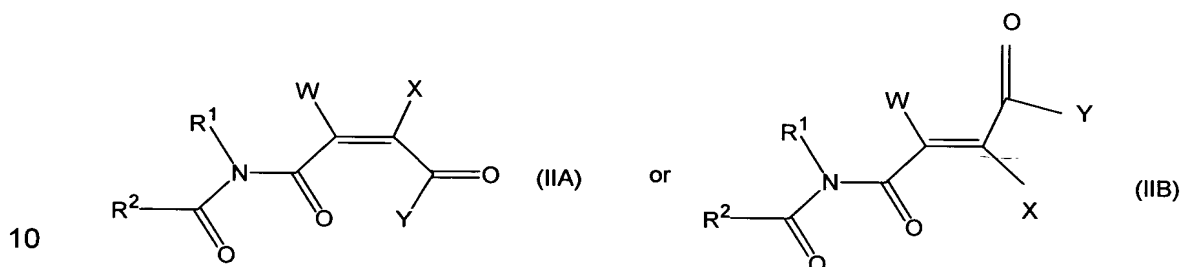
- 20 3. A compound according to claim 1 in which  $R^2$  represents a hydrogen atom or a  $C_{1-12}$  alkyl or  $C_{6-14}$  aryl group, each group being optionally substituted by one or more substituents selected from the group consisting of halogen atoms, nitro, cyano, hydroxyl,  $C_{1-4}$  alkyl,  $C_{1-4}$  haloalkyl,  $C_{1-4}$  alkoxy and  $C_{1-4}$  haloalkoxy groups.

4. A compound according to claim 1 in which W and X each independently represents a hydrogen, chlorine or bromine atom.

5. A compound according to claim 1 in which R<sup>1</sup> represents a methyl group, R<sup>2</sup> represents a hydrogen atom and W and X both represent a hydrogen atom or both represent a chlorine atom.

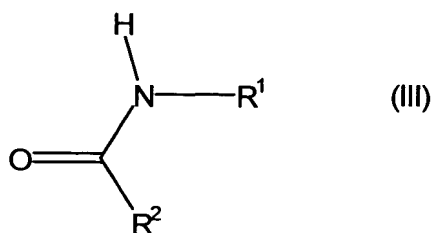
6. 3,4-Dichloro-6-hydroxy-1-methyl-2,5-dioxo-1,6-dihydropyridine.

5 7. A process for the preparation of a compound according to claim 1, which comprises reacting a compound of the general formula

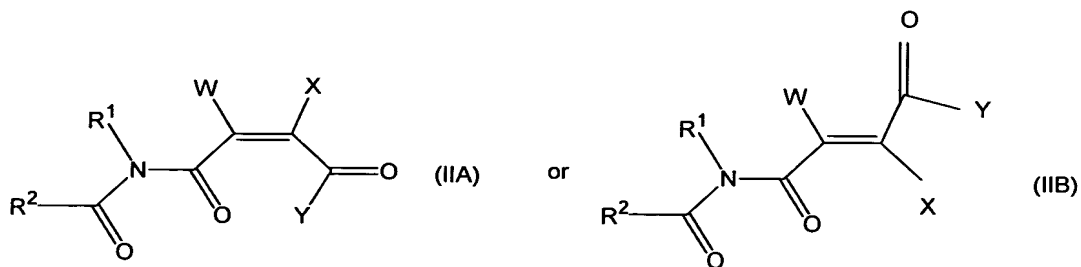


in which Y represents a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group or a group -OM where M represents an alkali metal atom

with a base in the presence of a compound of the general formula



15 8. A compound of the general formula IIA or IIB



or a salt thereof, in which

$R^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, aralkyl, heterocyclyl or heterocyclalkyl group;

$R^2$  represents a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, heterocyclyl or heterocyclalkyl group;  
 5 and

W and X each independently represents a hydrogen or halogen atom and

Y represents a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group or a group -OM where M represents an alkali metal atom,

10 with the proviso that, when  $R^1$ , W and X all represent a hydrogen atom and Y represents a hydroxyl group, then  $R^2$  is not hydrogen, methyl or chloromethyl.

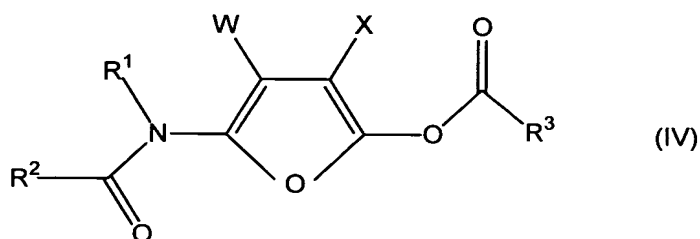
9. A compound according to claim 8 in which Y represents a hydrogen atom, a hydroxyl group or a group -OM where M represents a sodium or potassium atom.

10. A compound according to claim 8 in which  $R^1$  represents a methyl group,  $R^2$   
 15 represents a hydrogen atom, W and X both represent a hydrogen atom or both represent a chlorine atom, and Y represents a hydroxyl group.

11. (Z)-2,3-dichloro-4-[N-formyl-N-methylamino]-4-oxo-but-2-enoic acid.

12. A process for the preparation of a compound according to claim 8, which comprises reacting with a base a compound of the general formula

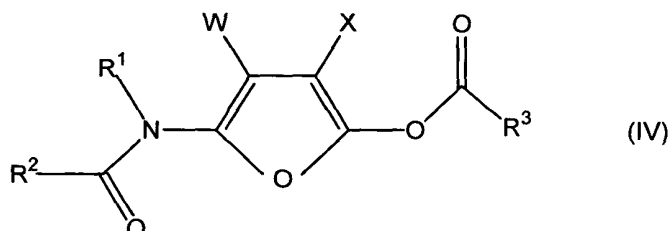
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in which  $R^3$  represents an optionally substituted alkyl, aryl or aralkyl group.

25

13. A compound of the general formula IV



5

in which

R<sup>1</sup> represents a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, aralkyl, heterocyclyl or heterocyclylalkyl group;

R<sup>2</sup> represents a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, aryl, aralkyl, acyl, heterocyclyl or heterocyclylalkyl group; and

10

W and X each independently represents a hydrogen or halogen atom and

R<sup>3</sup> represents an optionally substituted alkyl, aryl or aralkyl group.

14. A compound according to claim 13 in which R<sup>3</sup> represents a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkyl group optionally substituted by one or more halogen atoms.

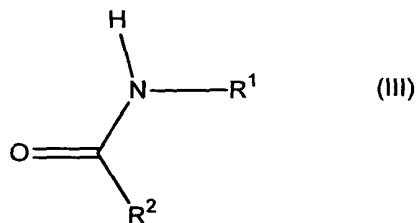
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15. A compound according to claim 13 in which R<sup>3</sup> represents a chloromethyl or dichloromethyl group.

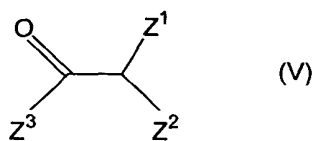
16. 5-[N-formyl-N-methylamino]-3,4-dichloro-2-furyl-2,2-dichloroacetate.

17. A process for the preparation of a compound according to claim 13, which comprises reacting a compound of the general formula

20



with a compound of the general formula



in which  $Z^1$  and  $Z^2$  each independently represents a hydrogen or halogen atom and  
 5  $Z^3$  is a halogen atom.

18. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a carrier and one or more compounds according to claim 1, 8 or 13.
19. A method for treating proliferative diseases, microbial diseases or viral diseases comprising administering to a patient a therapeutically effective amount of a  
 10 compound according to claim 1, 8 or 13.
20. A method according to claim 19 for inhibiting tumour growth.